

should be noted that a different order of certain steps in the claims would yield logically equivalent results which are equivalently claimed and are not disclaimed.

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method of making goods available by (1) brokering collective options at prices that aim at reflecting a group's marginal willingnesses to pay for said options and (2) affording personal use of said goods for which said options have been purchased, thereby charging discounted use prices that aim at reflecting the corresponding marginal costs of using any one of said goods, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting at least one family of differentiated and substitutable goods;
- (b) defining for each of these goods a use price that aims at reflecting its marginal costs of using;
- (c) bundling consumers into at least one group;
- (d) collecting price calls for collective options to use goods at said use prices from as many suppliers of goods of said family of goods as possible – irrespective of actual demand for any particular good – for said group;
- (e) purchasing all said options whose prices are as low as or lower than the group's supposed marginal willingnesses to pay for said options;
- (f) affording personal use of all goods, for which said options have been purchased, to any member of the group at said use prices.

2. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the process of purchasing said collective options to use goods of said family of goods at said discounted use prices occurs in many rounds over time rather than at once.

3. The method defined in claim 1 wherein at least two goods of at least one family of differentiated and substitutable goods are bundled into one offer of said options to use the goods at said use prices.

4. The method defined in claim 1 wherein said group is a previously formed group whose primary purpose is not or has not been the purchase of said collective options to use goods at said discounted use prices.

5. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising the step of controlling each member's utilization of said collective options and/or each member's use of goods purchased at said discounted use prices.
6. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the suppliers of the goods themselves or third parties afford personal utilization of same at said uniform prices if the requesting person can be identified as being eligible to use said goods at said use prices.
7. The method defined in claim 1 wherein said use price is different from marginal costs of using said good, including a price of zero.
8. The method defined in claim 1 wherein said use price is negative, i.e., a positive payment is made to a user of said good
9. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the bundling of consumers aims at forming homogeneous groups in respect to the members' supposed marginal willingness to pay for said options to use goods at said discounted use prices, the members' ability to pay, and/or the members' supposed pattern of interest in said options to use goods at said discounted use prices.
10. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising collecting a fee for membership in said group, including the possibility that the membership fee varies
- (a) according to the total amount that is to be paid to suppliers of the goods and/or
 - (b) according to a member's supposed pattern of marginal willingnesses to pay for said options to use goods at said discounted use prices.

11. The method defined in claim 1 wherein prices for said collective options to use goods at said use prices are offered to individual suppliers who then decide whether or not to accept the offer.

12. The method defined in claim 1 wherein said family of differentiated substitutable goods consists of only one good due to a lack of available substitutes to that good.

13. The method defined in claim 1 wherein all members or at least one sample of all members of the group vote on single offers of said options to use goods at said discounted use prices or bundles thereof, wherein that vote may apply Clarke's Demand Revealing Process or other voting processes.

14. The method defined in claim 1 wherein at least one sample or changing random samples of all members of said group vote on single offers of said options to use goods at said discounted use prices or bundles thereof by applying the Demand Revealing Process after Clarke or other voting processes, further comprising the steps of:

(a) accepting or rejecting the offer of said options to use goods at said discounted use prices for all members of said voting sample according to the result of the vote;

(b) correspondingly applying the offered price to the whole group in the case of an approving vote of the sample, but taking the sample's revealed willingness to pay for said option as a basis for the price to be paid by the remaining members of the group in the case of a rejecting vote of the sample while excluding same from the payment for said option and utilization thereof.

15. The method defined in claim 14 wherein said sample's revealed willingness to pay for said access right is taken as a basis for the price to be paid by the remaining members of the group, irrespective of whether or not said voting sample purchases said option at the price voted upon.

16. The method defined in claim 14 wherein said members of said voting sample are committed not to employ any alternative way of being able to use that specific good, which will be made available at said discounted use price with the purchase of the option they are voting on for the duration of the option's validity.

17. A method of making goods available by (1) auctioning personal options at prices that aim at maximizing the proceeds of the suppliers of said options and (2) affording personal use of said goods for which said options have been purchased, thereby charging discounted use prices that aim at reflecting the corresponding marginal costs of using any one of said goods, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) defining for a good a use price that aims at reflecting its marginal costs of using;
- (b) bundling consumers into at least one auction group;
- (c) eliciting bids for the personal option to use said good at said use price from any member of said auction group;
- (d) selecting one value of the bids for said personal option from said auction group at which revenue will be maximized or at which other long term objectives of the supplier are realized, given that each member of said auction group that submitted a bid higher than or at least as high as said value purchases said option at said value;
- (e) processing the purchase of said personal options at a price equal to said value for all members of said auction group with a bid for said option higher than or at least as high as said value;
- (f) affording personal use of all goods for which said personal options have been purchased, thereby charging said use price.

- 18. The method defined in claim 17 wherein at least two goods of at least one family of differentiated and substitutable goods are bundled into one offer of said personal options to use the goods at said use prices.
- 19. The method defined in claim 17 wherein said auction group is a previously formed group whose primary purpose is not the purchase of said personal options to use goods at said discounted use prices.
- 20. The method defined in claim 17, further comprising the step of controlling each member's utilization of said collective options and/or each member's use of goods purchased at said discounted use prices.
- 21. The method defined in claim 17 wherein the suppliers of the goods themselves or third parties afford personal utilization of same at said uniform prices if the requesting person can be identified as having auctioned a corresponding option for using said good at said use price.
- 22. The method defined in claim 17 wherein said use price is different from marginal costs of using said good, including a price of zero.
- 23. The method defined in claim 17 wherein said use price is negative, i.e., a positive payment is made to a user of said good.

24. The method defined in claim 17 wherein the bundling of consumers aims at forming homogeneous auction groups in respect to the participants' supposed willingness to pay for said options to use goods at said discounted use prices, the members' ability to pay and/or the members' supposed pattern of interest in said options to use goods at said discounted use prices.
25. The method defined in claim 17 wherein the members of the group are offered the participation in an auction group in the case that no agreement on an option price is reached with the supplier of a said option to use a good at said discounted use price.
26. The method defined in claim 17 wherein the members of said voting sample are offered the participation in an auction group in the case of a rejection of an offered option to use a good at said discounted use price.